

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 CU-04 OPR-02 DPW-01 DRC-01 /128 W

----- 061477

P R 101118Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7306

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15845

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, TH

SUBJECT: THE EARLY CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A. BANGKOK 15777; B. BANGKOK 15778;

C. FBIS BANGKOK 090938Z OCT 73

D. FBIS BANGKOK 091525Z OCT 73

E. FBIS BANGKOK 100204Z OCT 73.

SUMMARY: KHAISAENG SUKSAI, WHO SURRENDERED VOLUNTARILY TO THE POLICE OCTOBER 9, AS WELL AS THE PREVIOUS TWELVE ARRESTEES (REFERENCE A), ARE NOW UNDER ARTICLE 17 JURISDICTION ORDERED BY PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN. BECAUSE ARTICLE 17 ALLOWS INDEFINITE DETENTION, MORE FUEL HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE GRIEVANCES OF THE SUPPORTERS OF THE EARLY CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT. STUDENTS HAVE HELD RALLIES ON MOSE OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN BANGKOK DURING WHICH THEY HAVE SOLICITED DONATIONS FOR A DEFENSE FUND. WHILE STUDENTS PACK THESE RALLIES, MOST UNIVERSITIES ARE STILL IN THE MIDST OF EXAMS AND STUDENTS ARE THEREFORE NOT NECESSARILY

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AVAILABLE FOR OFF-CAMPUS DEMONSTRATIONS. THE LEADERSHIP

OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) HAS TAKEN A MODERATE APPROACH FOR THE MOMENT, PROBABLY HOPING TO KEEP THE ISSUE BEFORE THE PUBLIC WITHOUT RESORTING TO STREET DEMONSTRATIONS. END SUMMARY

1. FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM KAHON PHANOM, KHAISAENG SUKSAI, SURRENDERED TO THE POLICE OCTOBER 9. THE POLICE HAVE IDENTIFIED KHAISAENG AS THE KEY MAN IN A PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT (REFERENCE C). PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTAKACHORN HAS ORDERED ARTICLE 17 DETENTION FOR THE 13 ACCUSED (REFERENCE D) WHICH MEANS THAT THE POLICE CAN HOLD THEM UNTIL A FULL INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED. THIS MOVE CAME AS A SURPRISE BECAUSE EARLY REPORTS SUGGESTED THAT THE STUDENTS WOULD BE RELEASED ON BAIL SO THAT THEY COULD FINISH THEIR EXAMS.

2. THE RTG HAS FURTHER PLACED THE ARMY AND THE POLICE IN THE BANGKOK AREA ON ALERT.

3. STUDENTS HAVE HELD RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS ON MOST OF THE CAMPUSES IN THE BANGKOK AREA. THE LARGEST GATHERING WAS AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY WHOSE ADMINISTRATION HAS CANCELLED EXAMINATIONS. MOST OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE STILL IN THE MIDST OF EXAMS. UNTIL EXAMS ARE OVER, HEAVY STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEMONSTRATIONS IS UNLIKELY. THAMMASAT DEPUTY RECTORS SANGWIEN INTHARAWICHAI AND ADUL WICHAICHAROEN, PLUS 175 MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, SIGNED AN OPEN LETTER TO THANOM URGING THE RELEASE OF THE 12 DETAINEES (REFERENCE E). VARIOUS FACULTY AND STUDENT LEADERS HAVE STARTED COLLECTING MONDY FOR A DEFENSE FUND.

4. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT), DURING AN OCTOBER 9 MEETING, DECIDED TO TAKE A MODERATE APPROACH AT THE MOMENT, PROBABLY HOPING TO KEEP THE SITUATION BEFORE THE PUBLIC EYE BUT WITHOUT RESORTING TO DEMONSTRATIONS. THEY FELT THAT SINCE THIRAYUTH BONNMEE WAS NO LONGER A STUDENT, HE DOES NOT MAKE A GOOD RALLYING FIGURE.

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5. NEWSPAPER REACTION RUNS HEAVILY AGAINST THE RTG. MOST PAPERS HAVE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED THE COMMENT OF THANOM'S BROTHER, RETIRED POLICE MAJ. GEN. SANGA KITTAKACHORN. SANGA SAID THAT "IF CALLING FOR A CONSTITUTION IS TREASON, THEN 33 MILLION THAI HAVE COMMITTED TREASON."

6. CONCLUSION: BY INVOKING ARTICLE 17 DETENTION, THE

RTG MAY BE GIVING STUDENT AND FACULTY OPPOSITION A
RALLYING CAUSE. SINCE THE UNIVERSITIES ARE IN THE
MIDST OF EXAMS, STUDENT SUPPORT IS IN DISARRAY.
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